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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

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24 April 1967



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Information as of 1600
24 April 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Trucks and supplies continue to move from Laos into the A Shau Valley area of South Vietnam.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Communist military activity is continuing in the A Shau Valley with Route 548 being improved south-east from A Shau and trucks and supplies have been sighted throughout the area (Paras. 1-4). Enemy plans in northern I Corps reportedly include another attack on Quang Tri city (Paras. 5-7).

Tran Van Huong's presidential intentions may not be firm (Para. 3). One of Premier Ky's supporters was reportedly named chairman of the key Constituent Assembly sub-committee which will draft the presidential election laws (Para. 4).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:
Three US aircraft lost in raids on DRV air bases, and another in the vicinity of the Hon Gai railroad yards (Paras. 1-3).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

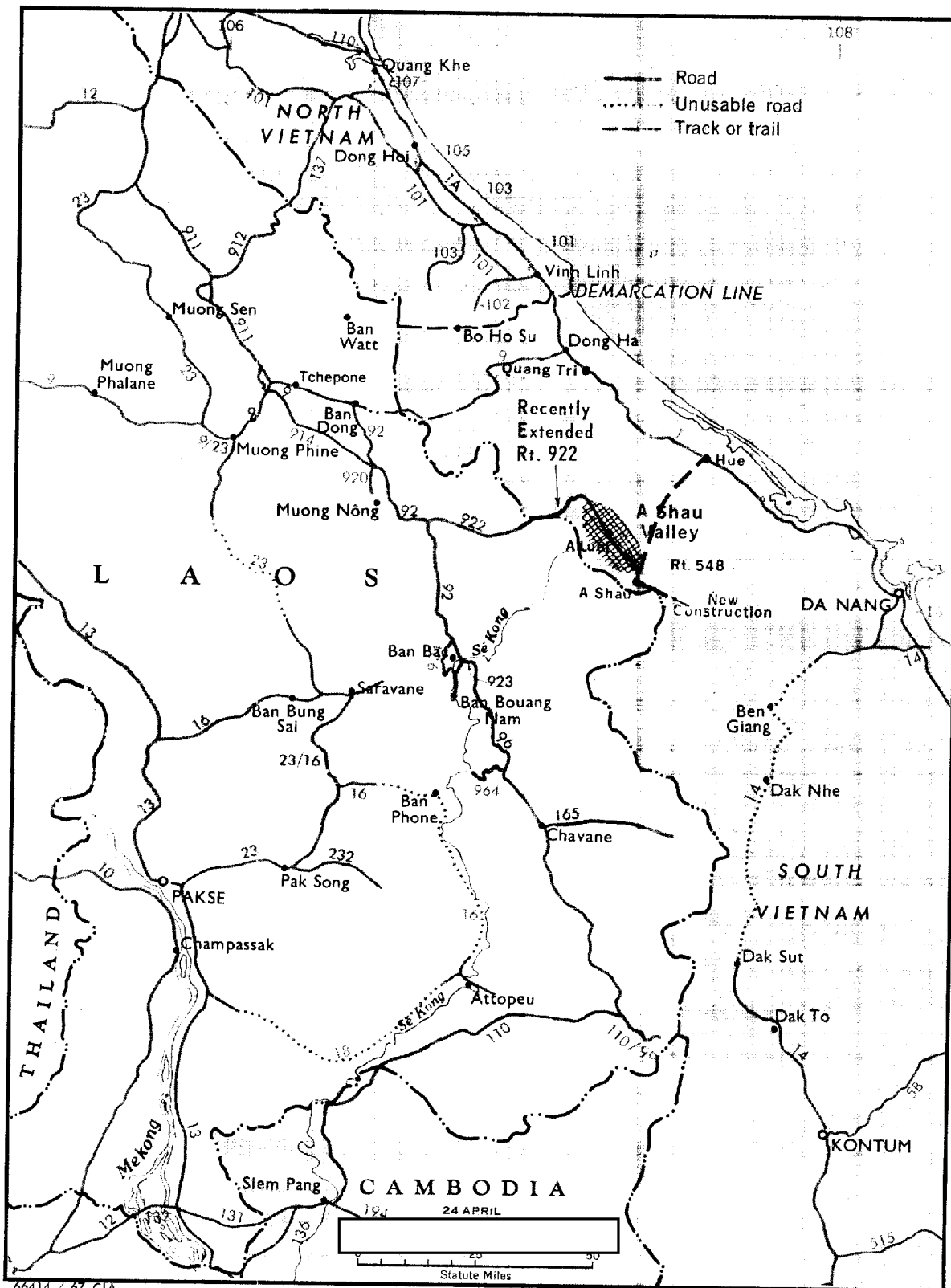
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V. Communist Political Developments: European Communist parties meeting in Czechoslovakia have made new noncommittal pledges of "still stronger political and material support" for Vietnam (Paras. 1-2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Heightened Communist military activity continues in the A Shau Valley of western Thua Thien Province. Enemy vehicles and tracks have been observed nearly three miles southeast of A Shau. This indicates that Route 548--which joins newly extended Laotian Route 922--is being improved southward from A Shau. Trucks, trailers, and quantities of oil and/or gasoline drums have been sighted at both A Luoi and A Shau airfields.

2. A recent report revealed that an enemy company was located near the main trail from A Shau to Hue. This group could either be troops infiltrating into northern I Corps or associated with the recently intensified construction activity. The Communists may be planning to improve the trail to facilitate the movement of men and supplies eastward from the valley.

3. Pilots attacking suspected enemy areas and vehicles north and south of A Shau have reported many secondary explosions, indicating that large stores of ammunition and fuel have already been moved into the valley.

4. Information furnished by a friendly guerrilla team which was on the north side of Route 922 last week states that Soviet antitank rounds were discovered in the vicinity. These rounds were identified as those used with the Soviet RPG-7 antitank weapon--an 80-mm. round with a maximum effective range of 500 meters and an armor penetration capability of 11.8 to 12.6 inches. This is the first indication that the North Vietnamese Army possesses this weapon.

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Communist Plans Reportedly Include Another Attack
On Quang Tri

5. The Communist attack on Quang Tri city in early April was designed to achieve several aims-- some long-range and some more immediate.

[redacted] in addition to the military success gained, the attack served to impress international opinion with the strength of the Viet Cong and thereby improve the bargaining position of the VC in the event of negotiations. Other enemy goals included the destruction of foodstuffs and the release of nearly 250 prisoners from the jails.

6. [redacted] the attack against Quang Tri city was the first step of a three-phased plan and will be followed by attacks on districts throughout Quang Tri Province. The third phase calls for an attack on Hue in Thua Thien Province as well as another, larger attack on Quang Tri city.

7. Attacks on populated centers are of propaganda value to the enemy in their campaign to influence the local populace. The recent attack in which the Communists gained temporary access to Quang Tri city visibly affected the morale of the inhabitants, although fear has eased since US troops reinforced local defenses. In addition, successful forays of this type also do much to raise the morale of the Communist units involved and are bound to provide further incentive to other enemy units throughout the area.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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Tran Van Huong's Presidential Intentions

3. Tran Van Huong, one of the prominent civilian candidates for the presidency, may be considering a deal with Premier Ky to run on a joint ticket as Ky's vice-presidential candidate.

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Huong is also reportedly negotiating other potential ticket combinations

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Huong is still working from his residence in Vung Tau, rather than Saigon, and the US Embassy does not consider his announced intentions to run as a certainty.

Ky Supporter Named to Important Constituent Assembly Position

4. One of Premier Ky's close supporters in the Constituent Assembly, Le Phuoc Sang, was named chairman of the subcommittee which will draft the presidential

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electoral laws

On 19 April, Ky requested Sang to avoid causing difficulties for the military candidate through such provisions in the regulations as restrictions which might narrow the field of potential candidates or a stipulation that the winning candidate would need a given percentage rather than a plurality of the total vote to be declared the actual winner.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. North Vietnamese air defense units shot down three US aircraft involved in the initial raids on DRV air bases at Hoa Lac and Kep on 24 April and destroyed another near the Hon Gai railroad yards. No bomb damage assessment is yet available on the air-field strikes.

2. Pilot reports of the US Air Force raid on the Hoa Lac Airfield, 22 miles west of Hanoi, indicate that cluster bomb units were detonated in a revetted area where four MIGs were parked and several large fires were started on either side of the main runway. A USAF F-4C was shot down by 37-mm. fire.

3. The results of the US Navy strike at Kep Air Base, 38 miles northwest of Hanoi, are unknown. Two US planes were brought down by groundfire. The two crewmen of an A-6A ejected in the immediate vicinity of Kep and are presumed captured. An F-4B which was hit over the target was abandoned by its crew over the Gulf of Tonkin. Its two crewmen were rescued in good condition.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Czechoslovakia on 24 April broadcast an "appeal" on Vietnam which was adopted by the European Communist parties meeting at Karlovy Vary. The "appeal" is a bland and ritualistic reiteration of standard Communist propaganda denouncing US "aggression" in Vietnam and the "hypocrisy" of US expressions of willingness to negotiate. The statement called upon the European people "to struggle for an unconditional cessation of the US bombing of the DRV and other aggressive actions against the Vietnamese people."

2. The European Communist parties declared their determination to give "still stronger" political and material support to the Vietnamese Communists, including-- "if asked by the government of the DRV"--the sending of "volunteers." This qualified pledge of "volunteers" has appeared periodically in similar joint statements, most notably in the Warsaw Pact statement on Vietnam on 7 July 1966.

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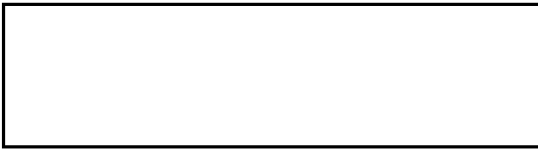
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